

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ADOBE PHOTOSHOP®

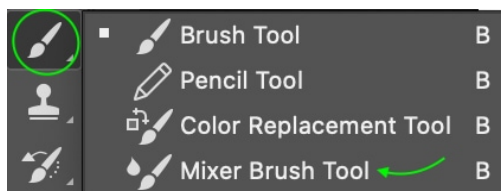
MIXER BRUSH

Painting with the Mixer Brush

The Mixer Brush simulates traditional painting techniques such as mixing colors on the canvas, combining colors on a brush, and varying paint wetness across a stroke. As a brush stroke is drawn, the Mixer Brush blends the brush color with the color of the area you're painting on. Included in the many Mixer Brush options are settings that control the amount of color the brush picks up from the area you're painting on, the rate at which the canvas paint "dries", and much more. The effect created is not only beautiful but realistic, as if you are painting on a canvas with real paint.

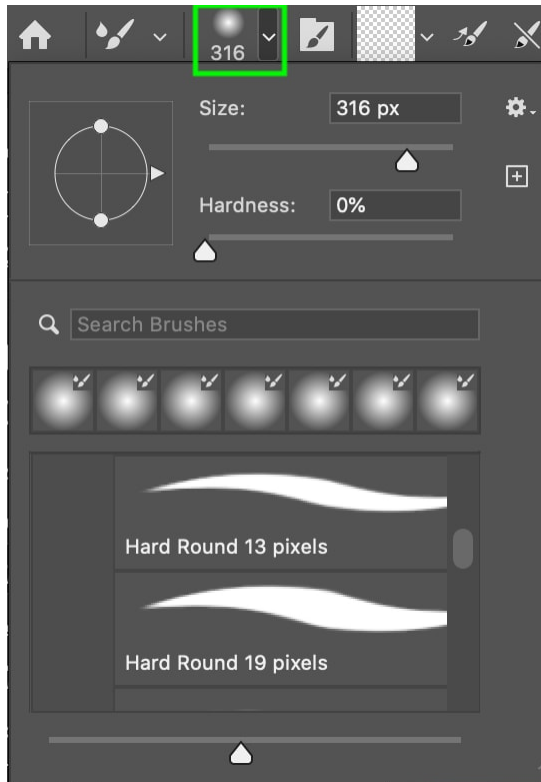
Using The Mixer Brush Tool

The **Mixer Brush** is one of the **Brush Tool** choices in the toolbar. Click and hold the Brush Tool icon and select **Mixer Brush Tool** from the options that appear:



The Mixer Brush Tool is available as a Brush Tool option in the Toolbar.

Set the Brush Tip, Brush Size, and more by clicking the **Brush Size** icon in the Menu Bar and selecting from the options in the dropdown menu:



Clicking the Brush Size icon to set the Brush Size, Brush Tip, and more.

Setting the Color of a Brush

The Mixer Brush has two paint wells, a **Reservoir Well** and a **Pickup Well**.

- The **Reservoir Well** holds the paint that will be *applied* to the canvas during a brush stroke. It may be a solid color or a mixture of colors previously sampled from the canvas.
- The **Pickup Well** *samples* (picks up) colors from the underlying canvas during a stroke. This picked-up paint is mixed with the paint from the Reservoir Well as the brush stroke is drawn.

Loading the Reservoir Well

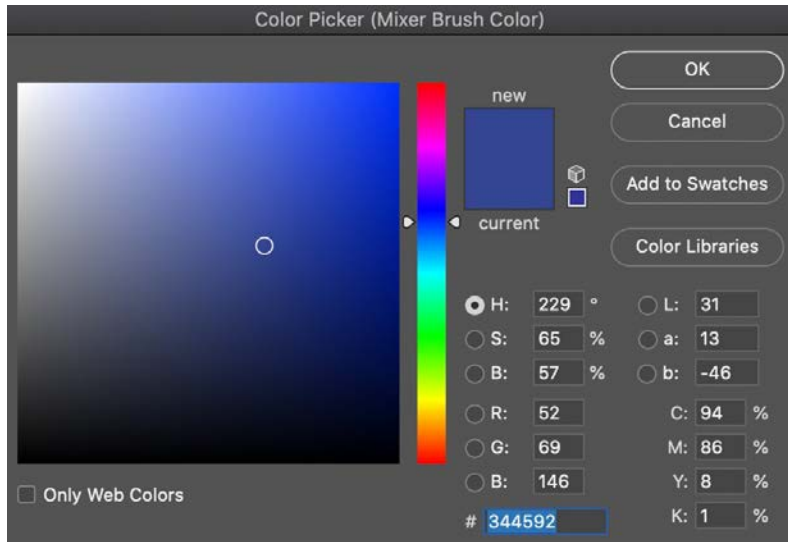
To load a mixture of colors sampled from the canvas, hold the Alt key (Windows) or the Option key (Mac OS) and click in the canvas. The colors at the sample point, including any color variations, will be loaded into the Reservoir Well and will be displayed in the Current Brush Load Paint Swatch (see below).

Clicking on the current Foreground Color in the Toolbar will load that solid color into the Reservoir Well and update the Current Brush Load Paint Swatch.

To set a solid Reservoir Well color, click on the **Current Brush Load Paint Swatch** in the Menu Bar, choose a color from the color palette, and click OK.



The Current Brush Load swatch.



Choosing the brush color.

The chosen color (blue in this example) will blend with colors found in the area you paint over.



Painting blue over a white background area.

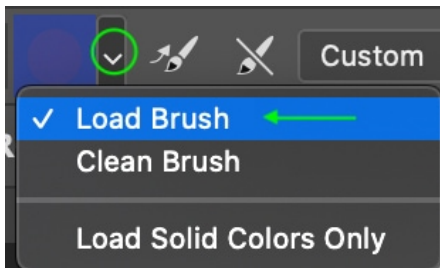


Painting blue over an existing red brush stroke.

Brush Load Options

Access the Brush Load Options menu by clicking the arrow icon next to the Current Brush Load Paint Swatch.

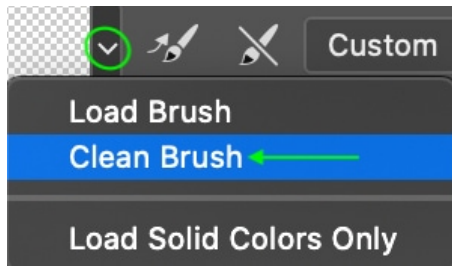
- Selecting **Load Brush** will re-fill the Reservoir Well with the last used paint swatch, which may be a solid color or a color mixture sampled from the canvas:



Select **Load Brush** to re-fill the brush with the last used paint swatch.

Note: Selecting **Load Solid Colors Only** restricts the Reservoir Well to a solid color.

- Selecting **Clean Brush** will remove all color from the Reservoir Well, resulting in a colorless brush. A clean brush applies no color but can be used to blend an already painted stroke:

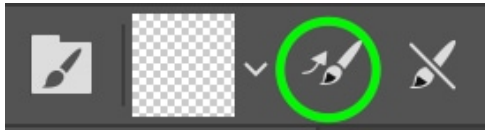


Selecting **Clean Brush** removes all paint.

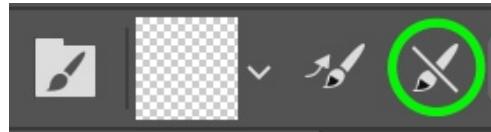


A red brush stroke with a blended edge.

- To load the brush automatically after each stroke, click the **Load Brush After Each Stroke** icon to the right of the paint swatch. To clean the brush automatically after each stroke, click the **Clean Brush After Each Stroke** icon:





The **Load Brush After Each Stroke** icon.

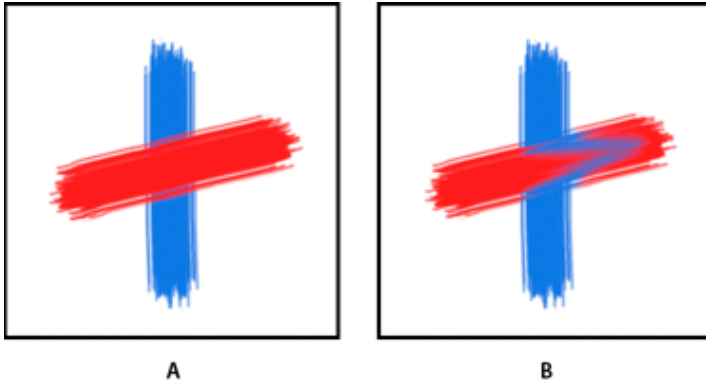


The **Clean Brush After Each Stroke** icon.

Understanding Mixer Brush Settings

The following options are unique to the Mixer Brush:

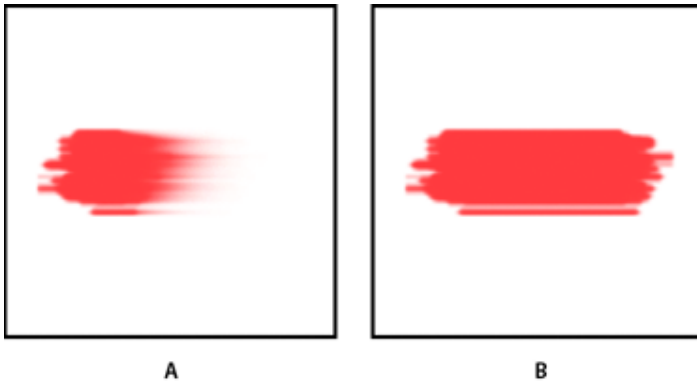
- Current Brush Load switch**
 Provides a means to set paint reservoir color, and to access load options. From the pop-up panel, click Load Brush to fill the brush with the reservoir color, or Clean Brush to remove paint from the brush. To perform these tasks after each stroke, select the automatic Load  or Clean  options.
- Preset pop-up menu**
 Provides a selection of popular combinations of Wet, Load, and Mix settings (Presets), and displays the name of the currently selected Preset.
- Wet**
 Controls how much paint the brush picks up from the canvas. Higher settings produce more mixing of canvas colors into applied brush colors.



Wetness examples: A = 0% B = 100%

- **Load**

Specifies the amount of paint in the reservoir. At low load values, strokes run out of paint more quickly.



Load examples: A = 1% B = 100%

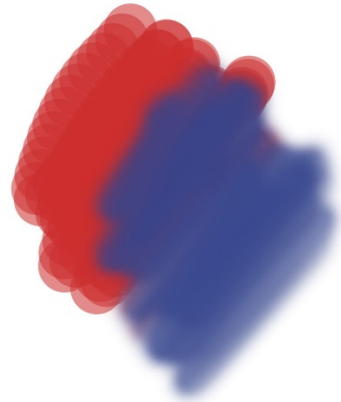
- **Mix**

Controls the ratio of canvas paint (Pickup Well) to brush paint (Reservoir Well). At 100%, all paint is picked up from the canvas; at 0%, all paint comes from the reservoir.

Note: The Wet setting continues to determine how paints mix on the canvas.



Mix value set to 80.



Mix value set to 10.

- **Sample All Layers**

If checked, the brush picks up canvas color from all visible layers. If un-checked, the brush picks up canvas color from the current layer only.

Tips and tricks:

- If you work on a dedicated mixer brush layer (a duplicate or blank layer) you can toggle the mixer brush layer on/off to see the progress. It is also possible to work on separate mixer brush layers for different sections of an image.
- You may want to use a brush that creates a dramatic stroke, such as a palette knife brush.
- When using the Brush tool as an airbrush, hold down the mouse button without dragging to build up color.
- Start with the dark areas of the image first.
- Follow textures and lines in the image to help direct the flow of the brush strokes.
- The most dramatic mixing effects occur at edges where the colors change in the image.
- Adjust your Flow value to get harder or softer strokes.
- You may want to use a layer mask to reveal fine details like eyes or whiskers after painting to bring back a bit of sharpness in those areas.
- Adjust the brush size to suit the areas you are working in, fine detail needs a smaller brush, and larger areas may support bigger brush strokes (a bigger brush covers more area, which is an added bonus).
- If the Mixer Brush is not working properly (perhaps the color isn't blending, or the brush is functioning as a normal brush) make sure you've set your mix and wet values high enough. The values should not be set to zero.

- If no color mixing occurs check to see if Sample All Layers is checked. If it is un-checked make sure the current layer has pixels with color at the brush stroke location.
- If you're still having issues, try working with a different brush tip. Photoshop's default brushes are compatible with the mixer brush, however, there could be a bug or a stray setting in a third-party brush that prevents it from mixing properly.